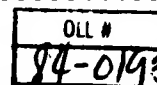


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EXDIS

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PREL, MASS, IS, EG
SUBJECT: ARENS EXPRESSES CONCERN ABOUT SUPPLY OF U.S.
ARMS TO EGYPT

REF: (A) 83 TEL AVIV 17696, (B) TEL AVIV 454

1. SECRET - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. DURING SEPARATE MEETINGS WITH CODEL TOWER LAST WEEK, BOTH DEFENSE MINISTER ARENS AND DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER DAVID LEVY SAID ISRAEL IS QUITE CONCERNED ABOUT U.S. MILITARY AID TO EGYPT, A POINT WHICH THE ISRAELIS HAVE RECENTLY RAISED WITH OTHER VISITING CODELS (REF. A). SPEAKING WITH CONSIDERABLE FEELING DURING A JANUARY 4 DINNER ATTENDED BY SENIOR MOD OFFICIALS AND IDF OFFICERS (REF. B), ARENS SAID ISRAELIS WERE VERY WORRIED ABOUT "U.S. REARMAMENT" OF EGYPT AND NOTED THAT ISRAEL WAS TAKING THIS FACTOR INTO ACCOUNT WHEN DRAWING UP ITS OWN MILITARY BUDGET. HERUT MK YOSEF ROM, WHO ALSO ATTENDED THE DINNER, SAID THAT ISRAEL WAS CONCERNED ABOUT INCREASED MECHANIZATION AND HENCE MOBILITY OF THE EGYPTIAN ARMY. MOD DIRECTOR GENERAL MERON SAID THAT ISRAEL HAD AN UNDERSTANDING THAT THE SUPPLY OF ARMS TO EGYPT WOULD BE LINKED TO THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE PEACE PROCESS. IN SHORT, ARENS SAID, ISRAEL IS AFRAID THAT SOPHISTICATED U.S. WEAPONS WOULD BE TURNED AGAINST ISRAEL SHOULD MUBARAK'S REGIME BE SUDDENLY OVERTHROWN BY ANTI-PEACE FORCES. SENATOR TOWER COUNTERED BY STRESSING THAT THE U.S. COMMITMENT TO ISRAEL IS PRIMARY IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY, AND ISRAEL SHOULD NOT BE AFRAID OF THE EGYPTIAN ARMY. OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CODEL ALSO INTERJECTED THAT EGYPT HAS OTHER CONCERNS, PARTICULARLY QADHAFI'S EXPANSIONIST TENDENCIES WHICH THREATEN ALL OF NORTH AFRICA. (NOTE: A FAIRLY ACCURATE ACCOUNT OF ARENS' COMMENTS TO CODEL TOWER ON U.S. ARMS AID TO EGYPT

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APPEARED IN THE JANUARY 6 MAARIV. THE ARTICLE ALSO
NOTED THAT THE TWO SENATORS DISAGREED WITH ARENS'
ASSESSMENT OF THE "EGYPTIAN THREAT.")
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3. IN A SEPARATE JANUARY 4 MEETING, DEPUTY PRIME
MINISTER DAVID LEVY ALSO SPOKE ABOUT ISRAEL'S "COLD
PEACE" WITH EGYPT. HE SAID THAT THERE HAS BEEN AN
"INTERNAL STORM" IN ISRAEL OVER THE HIGH PRICE
ISRAEL PAID FOR PEACE. HE SAID THAT HE AND A MAJORITY
OF ISRAELIS BELIEVE FERVENTLY IN PEACE WITH EGYPT,
BUT WHAT HAS RESULTED FROM THE PEACE TREATY IS NOT
EXACTLY THE "REALIZATION OF A DREAM." HE SAID THAT
ISRAEL NONETHELESS WAS TRYING TO PREVENT FURTHER
DETERIORATION AND TO BRING ABOUT AN IMPROVEMENT.
THE PEACE WITH EGYPT MUST BE STRENGTHENED AND HE
EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT "EGYPT'S REARMAMENT." HE
HOPED THAT EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI CONSULTATIONS AND THE
CONTINUED INVOLVEMENT OF THE U.S. WOULD HELP TO
ENSURE THAT PEACE WITH EGYPT WILL ENDURE AND THAT
THE PROCESS CAN BE EXPANDED.
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4. THE SUBJECT OF U.S. MILITARY AID TO EGYPT DID NOT
COME UP IN THE CODEL'S MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER
SHAMIR AND KNESSET FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE COMMITTEE
CHAIRMAN ELIAHU BEN-ELISSAR (ISRAEL'S FIRST AMBASSADOR
IN CAIRO.)

5. THIS CABLE NOT SEEN BY CODEL TOWER. FLATEN
END OF MESSAGE

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